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many in whom it is choked and stifled by the lack of answering power among those with whom they come in contact. We too often fail to recognise the latent potentialities in their minds; too often also, in our world-hardened wisdom do we fail to hear the simple but eternal truths that those undeveloped lips can tell us. We forget that the innocence of inexperience is but one degree less beautiful than innocence with knowledge; and so we pass on, never thinking that we have left unopened a casket of precious gems, which, though perhaps uncut and unpolished, are not on that account of less intrinsic value. Emerson spoke truly when he said, "The fountain of beauty is the heart"; nor is it alone the heart of the man or woman who knows the world with its bitter and sweet, it may be that of the child whose springs of affection and appreciation are as yet clear from the taint of the world's wisdom.

"The fountain of beauty is the heart," and how clear must that fountain be when the heart can say, in a noble yet humble self-consciousness, "I have loved much, and not selfishly." Truly as we read this little poem (and no *poem* ever deserved the name better), we see beneath its surface that which tells of a power of sympathy and unselfish love latent in a heart that in after years proved to all the world the worth of its purity and the grandeur of its courage.

MOTHERS' EDUCATIONAL COURSE.

BY MRS. WENTWORTH.

QUESTION.

WOULD you condemn or justify David's conduct with regard to (a) Saul, (b) Achish, (c) Shimei? Treat the subject as a lesson for children.

ANSWER.

In speaking to children on David's life, they must be reminded that his times were times of savagery and rudeness, when human life was not respected as it is now and when kings had almost absolute power to do as they liked. In the instances of David's conduct in the matter of Saul and Achish he was a hunted man with everyone's hand against him, and as we see in some of his Psalms written at that time, he was often tempted to despair. In his conduct towards Saul we must admire his forbearance on more than one occasion, and when his enemy was delivered into his hand he forebore to touch the Lord's anointed, though he would have acted according to the custom of his time and according to the advice given him in killing him. In the matter of Achish, his feigning to be mad showed a want of trust in God and he descended to what we should call "a low trick" in order to escape, and this strikes us all the more when we read his Psalms of absolute trust in God's power to help him and in his own entire dependence on it; but here again we must think of the desperate straits he was in and the temptation to think he was forsaken. In the case of Shimei we again see the absence of a revengeful spirit such as we might have expected in those times.

QUESTION.

Show that Solomon represents some aspects of 19th century thought. Write such a study of his character as you would bring before schoolboys—say in vacation.

ANSWER.

Perhaps he represents 19th century characteristics in placing intellect and ability above morality, and an easy toleration

of all views and worships above the pure worship God commands. He saw what was best and followed what was lower, and while we can only admire a wide-hearted toleration of other people's views, we must see that if we ourselves have not a firm foundation in our own belief and a simple upright determination to hold by the best teaching of our Church of England, our characters will deteriorate and become slipshod. Toleration of the views of others ought not to mean the condition of mind which says, "Anything will do." I think we might show a schoolboy that it is his plain duty to study the principles of his religion, to examine what he has been taught, and to see that what he holds is strong enough to influence his life—otherwise that his religion is vain. We can also see in Solomon's life how it is possible to inherit fortune, riches, intellectual gifts, and every possible opportunity for doing good, and yet squander it and fall lower, blinding our eyes to what true greatness is. Solomon, who was heir to a magnificent kingdom, great riches and every possible advantage that money, brains, and position can give, yet fell into idolatry through disobedience to God's command and left his kingdom divided and on the verge of rebellion. Whereas David was born with what we should call no advantages and yet rose to be greatest of all, Solomon born with every advantage yet lost all, and we see in this story how history repeats itself inasmuch as we still live under the same Divine laws, and how in the temptations and opportunities of school-life each boy can be building for himself a future of usefulness and nobleness by resisting the evil that he must find and by determining to place himself on the side of right, or he can drift with the stream and let himself be carried away by every temptation, and before he almost knows can have entered on a downward career.

QUESTION.

Is there any apparent harshness in our Lord's reasons for teaching by parables? Explain as to children.

ANSWER.

Yes, at first sight it seems that the words of our Lord, "that seeing they might not see and not understand," etc., and "make the heart of this people dark," etc., might mean that

Christ did not want all to come to the knowledge of the truth in Him. But when we look deeper, we see that it does not contradict what we know to be His Will, that "all should be converted and live"; but that in spiritual as in natural things we follow a Divine law, which is that if we live only to please ourselves without thought of God, our perception as to right and wrong becomes gradually blunted and our spiritual sight becomes darkened, and by degrees we become unable to understand Christ's teaching; our ears are dulled to hear the Heavenly voices speaking and our eyes to see the good and lovely or the sad and pitiful around us, and try to help; and our hearts grow cold and hard, so that literally we are unable to see with our eyes and hear with our ears and become, as St. John says, "dead in trespasses and sins." In putting it simply to children, one might say that as they see all the flowers and plants and trees and birds and animals have a law that they live by, given them by God, so there is a law for us too, but a law for higher beings who have power to disobey that law; that even little children are not like mechanical dolls to be wound up and *made* to be good, but that they have power to open their eyes and ears to Christ's teaching which is going on around them every day, in the beautiful things they see and hear and in the little trials they have to overcome and in the many little ways they can help others, and in not trying to do this they close their eyes and ears and hearts to all the love and beauty and goodness that Christ is trying to teach and show them here, and at the last they become like those people in the Bible who were *unable* to understand Him.

QUESTION.

Write a progressive course of the parables, for children from six to sixteen. Explain a parable as for a child of six, and a more difficult parable as for a girl of sixteen.

ANSWER.

Parable of the Talents, for a child of six.

Explain to the child the meaning of talents, *i.e.*, gifts God has given to us. God gives every little child some gift or gifts—it may be some opportunity for serving Him here (such as being useful or kind in any particular way), or some ability

he has given. One child may love music, or one love animals or painting, etc. (this can be enlarged upon). These gifts or talents, we know, are given in different ways to different children. Some have more, some less, like in the parable, but they are given, few or many, by God, and to be used for Him, and He will ask us for an account of how we have used our talents. Even if one servant thinks he has very little given to him, God says he has still got to "trade" with it, that is, to "make the most of it," use it in God's service, and God looks, not on the amount the servant brings back, but on how each has increased what he had to start with, however little that was, and the "Well done, faithful servant," was said equally to the four talents returned as to the ten. We see how if we don't use our talents or gifts that they are taken from us, and this we see is Nature's law, and we can explain it from natural history, and also say how if we were to refuse to use our arm or leg it would lose its power and become useless or dead, and God's gifts are always increasing or getting less, as we use or neglect them; that no child must think like the unprofitable servant that he can keep his talent in a napkin, without its getting less; that if we neglect our work that God has set us to do here, we shall one day see that what we might have done for God has been done for Him by someone else, and that that other has become what we might have been.

Parable of Dives and Lazarus, for a girl of sixteen.

This parable was made clearer to me by Trench's explanation of the rich man's sin—it was unbelief, want of faith in anything beyond this present world, no belief in a kingdom of truth, love and mercy around him, so that wrapped in his own selfish ease he refused to see or share in the joys and sorrows of his fellow-men. The hell where he was "in torments" was the awakening, when after death these outward comforts and shows were stripped from him and were no longer able to blind him, as they often do us, to the realities of life, but he now saw himself and them as they were not as he imagined them to be, *i.e.*, he saw Lazarus afar off in Abraham's bosom. In the "gulf fixed" we must understand the separation of himself from God which he had begun in this life by shutting out God's love from his life, and which when he died was fixed

between Hades where he was and Paradise where Lazarus was, that place which we speak of as the place of departed spirits and of which we know so little, but we know that the separation or "gulf fixed" there between Dives and Lazarus was already begun in this life by his own act, though it is only in the next that he *sees* it. We also see how death, when it comes, changes nothing in our character; that goes on as we have made or marred it into the next world. One comforting thought might be spoken of, that this next stage awakens Dives through pain to do what he has probably never done before, *i.e.*, to feel for others (perhaps the first stage in a fresh beginning of life), and to know where he had brought himself "into this place of torment," and we see how this knowledge could only come to him through the agony of feeling how in this life he had thrown away the opportunities God had placed within his reach of helping and succouring others. In Dives' request and Abraham's answer we see the great truth that this world and its opportunities are what God has given to each of us to use aright, and that it is in the common things of daily life that He means us to see His kingdom and to feel our way to Him, and that if these do not rouse us to live near Him, then no signs or wonders, or even one rising from the dead to tell us what is on the other side, will have power to bring us to Him. That faith is not brought about by signs and wonders, but is a moral act between our souls and God. This explanation, though imperfectly put, has made clear to me many difficulties I found in this parable, and I think all might be spoken of to a girl of sixteen.

QUESTION.

In what ways should the Zeitgeist affect our religious teaching? How would you deal with current thought in the treatment of difficult questions?

ANSWER.

I think we should feel in all that is going on around us, in the new discoveries being made and new interests opening up and new ways of looking at old beliefs, that we must as parents strive to keep our minds open and, as far as we can, keep in touch with our present 20th century, so that in our religious

teaching we may be able to give our children, besides a firm hold on the vital truths that have come down to us, also an open-minded interest towards the current thought of our day, that they may be able to "try all things and hold fast that which is good." And in dealing with the many difficult questions that must come sooner or later to our children, I think we could help them by showing that science is progressive, not fixed; that the discoveries of to-day may be superseded or enlarged by the discoveries of to-morrow. That God is revealing Himself to us as He did to the Israelites of old, and has been doing to all mankind since time began (1) through men's consciences (spoken of by St. Paul as "those which have no law" (that is, no written revelation) "do by nature the things of the law," etc.); (2) through His prophets, who are the leaders in all science, literature, art, etc., the pioneers among us; (3) through Christ's spirit inspiring our hearts to more love to men, as in the various self-sacrificing and brave deeds we see and the different philanthropic schemes set on foot. That whatever difficulties come to us and even feelings of unbelief, they come from our present imperfect knowledge, and that even if we have to go through our dark hours, we know that no advance has ever been made except through effort and pain, and if we hold fast to our belief in truth and goodness and do not shrink from our duty, God will make all things clearer to us and we shall find that our dark hours are those we look back on as the most precious.

HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR GIRLS.

BY NELLIE HARLOW BEER.

A SPIRITED discussion was raging a short time ago in the columns of a well-known London "Daily" on "The Education of the Middle Class Girl," and needless to say "High Schools," as representing in concrete form our modern educational theories for females, received the lion's share of praise and blame. Perhaps of all the startling changes which have taken place since the early Victorian era, few have been more startling or more rapid, than those which concern the education of women. The late Sir Walter Besant, in *Fifty Years Ago*, which was published in 1888, remarked that, fifty years ago the higher education of women was like "the snakes in Iceland"—it did not exist. There were of course always the select few, who amid numberless difficulties and discouragements, vindicated the right of woman's *brain* to be trained and cultivated as well as her heart and hands, but these were only *the few*, and they were regarded for the most part with the kind, half pitying, half amused indulgence, we give to an animal of remarkable intelligence, or to a precocious child. It was only at first by slow degrees that the right of women to have as careful and systematic a training as had long been decreed for their brothers was at all recognized, but the idea once firmly engrafted bore rapid fruit. If we wish to realize the difference in woman and woman's ideals our present-day system has made, we have only to compare the types presented to us in the novels of the early fifties, and those which are found in the writings of to-day. The "Amelia Sedley" and "Dora" of Dickens and Thackeray, and the "Valentine" and "Julie" of Besant and Mrs. Humphry Ward, if they could meet in a modern drawing-room, would find almost as much difficulty in sympathising with and understanding each other, as would a Chinese and a European lady, and the difference in their views of life would be due in a great extent to the difference in their early training. The fragile and interesting young woman, who fainted on the least provocation,